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NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

Grand Bay NERR to be Site for Mercury Monitoring

NOAA's Air Resources Laboratory (ARL) has announced that it will establish a long-term atmospheric mercury monitoring site at the [Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) (NERR) in Moss Point, Mississippi. The monitoring will allow researchers to study the emission, transport, and atmospheric deposition of mercury compounds in coastal waters. The presence of mercury in the environment, its wide distribution and cycling in coastal and aquatic ecosystems, and risks to human health constitute a major environmental resource management issue. Despite this fact, the implementation of cost-effective solutions is hampered by inadequate understanding of the processes of mercury emission and deposition. The National Science and Technology Council has urged expanded research and monitoring efforts on mercury deposition. The ARL decided to focus on the Gulf of Mexico because of the large number of mercury-related fish consumption advisories there. The Grand Bay NERR, part of the national system administered by the Estuarine Reserves Division of the [Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management](#), was selected for the site because of its existing meteorological and water quality monitoring infrastructure, which is part of the [System-wide Monitoring Program](#), as well as its location relative to the Gulf and potential sources of airborne mercury. ARL will measure mercury in the atmosphere and in rainfall. Eventually, instruments will be added to measure other compounds that are typically co-emitted with mercury. NOAA's Air Resources Laboratory, founded in 1948 as a branch of the U.S. Weather Bureau, provides monitoring, research and assessment of air quality nationwide, including forecasting. For more information, see <http://www.arl.noaa.gov/>. Contact: Susan.White@noaa.gov.

Calcasieu Lake Marine Debris Project Rescheduled, Seeking Volunteers

July 27, 2006

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Louisiana Sea Grant College Program need volunteers with boats from 7 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26, to participate in the Calcasieu Lake Marine Debris Marking & Mapping Program. Volunteers should meet at 7 a.m. at Calcasieu Point Landing, 3955 Henry Pugh Blvd., Lake Charles. Participants will be provided with maps, buoys and PVC markers and will travel to sections of Big Lake, Moss Lake and West Cove to mark debris and record GPS coordinates. The first 100 volunteers will receive a free T-shirt, and all registered volunteers will be treated to lunch and drinks and will be eligible to win door prizes. Hurricane Rita scattered residential, industrial and vegetative debris throughout the Calcasieu Lake estuary system, creating hazards for recreational and commercial boaters, as well as their vessels and gear. Before this debris can be removed, it must be located, marked and mapped. NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, Louisiana Sea Grant, Lake Charles Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), Lake Charles Power Squadron, LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Lake Charles Pilots, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and Semptra Energy have teamed up to address the problem. Ship to Shore Co., Capt. Sammie Faulk and Stine Lumber also have provided support to the project.

The original volunteer day scheduled for June 24 was cancelled due to an oil spill, but the program enjoyed a successful kickoff July 15 thanks to the involvement of fishermen participating in the 21st Annual Lake Charles CCA Trout Shoot Out. For boaters unable to participate on Aug. 26, maps and markers are available now at no charge at Calcasieu Point Landing. Boaters are asked to keep these

materials onboard and to mark and report and debris they find during their travels. Markers will remain available throughout the summer.

For more information, or to report marine debris, visit www.laseagrant.org/debris or contact Tim Osborn, Tim.Osborn@noaa.gov, (337) 291-2111; Kevin Savoie, KSavoie@agcenter.lsu.edu, (337) 475-8812; or Justin Farrell, jfarrell@lsu.edu, (225) 578-6348.

This effort is made possible with involvement of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey with the funding and support of NOAA's Marine Debris Program, which is part of the NOAA Office of Response and Restoration (National Ocean Service). The NOAA Marine Debris Program works with other NOAA offices and partners to support national, state, local and international efforts to protect and conserve our nation's natural resources and coastal waterways from the impacts of marine debris.

NOAA is Encouraging Everyone to Prepare for Hurricane Season

July 30, 2006 — [NOAA](#) is ready as we enter the peak of the [North Atlantic Hurricane Season](#) and we want to make sure you are as well. While NOAA will again provide the best possible [forecasts](#), it is vital that everyone living in [hurricane](#) prone areas be [prepared](#). [Max Mayfield](#), director of the [NOAA National Hurricane Center](#) says, "The message for everyone is the same, whether we have an active season or a below-normal season, you've got to have a plan in place and you've got to be ready to implement that plan. Remember one hurricane hitting where you live is enough to make it a bad season."

How is NOAA Prepared for Hurricane Season

This year, NOAA committed more than \$300 million dollars to track and forecast hurricanes. In FY 2007, NOAA requested an additional \$109 million dollars for hurricane-related investments. Currently, NOAA is focusing on further improving hurricane [track](#) and [intensity](#) forecasting through better [observations](#), enhancing its [modeling](#) efforts (including those related to storm surge and inland flooding) and the continuation of [Joint Hurricane Testbed](#) to advance the transfer of new [research](#) and technology into operational hurricane prediction.

Improving NOAA equipment is also critical. [NOAA aircraft](#), the [W-P3 Orions](#) and the [Gulf Stream IV](#), provide essential observations and data critical to the NOAA National Hurricane Center forecasters and supplement the U.S. Air Force Reserve reconnaissance flights. The \$14.2 million dollars NOAA received in FY 2006 supplemental appropriations to improve future aircraft service will add an additional W-P3 in 2007, and upgrade the radar and instrumentation on all of NOAA's aircraft.

NOAA also works year-round with federal, state and local emergency managers; educating them about weather effects from hurricanes, while they educate NOAA about response issues and their challenges. It is a constant learning process and the key is working together to ensure that the public takes appropriate action this hurricane season.

Most preparedness activity and outreach takes place outside hurricane season. In May of 2006, as part of NOAA's ongoing mission to enhance economic security and national safety, the NOAA National Weather Service again led its annual [Hurricane Awareness Tour](#) — this year focusing on Gulf Coast states. The tour helped raise awareness about the potential effects from a hurricane landfall with FEMA, local governments, emergency managers, schools, the public and the media working as a team to increase [hurricane awareness](#) and encourage preparedness in this vulnerable area of the nation.

NOAA Provides Critical Support after Hurricane Landfall

NOAA is well known for its services prior to a hurricane landfall, but the agency also provides [vital services](#) after the storm. NOAA provides [aerial images](#) and real-time [storm tide level information](#) to emergency responders, utilizes [satellite imagery](#) to determine coastal impacts, assesses hazardous material spills, and [surveys critical ports and waterways](#). Read the [full story](#).

New NOAA Site Posts Critical Gulf Coast Storm Information

NOAA has instituted “C-SIDE” as a comprehensive Gulf Coast Storm Information Center, providing direct linkage to local, state and federal information as it pertains to severe weather preparation and monitoring across the Gulf of Mexico coastal region. C-Side is the acronym for Coastal Studies, Information and Data for the Ecosystem. The site includes recommendations for home preparation and evacuation as well as time-sensitive data, weather products and storm surge information. Post-storm assessments on the ecosystem, response and recovery products, environmental data and information, and remotely sensed data and imagery for affected areas will be available for response and recovery efforts. Created by Russ Beard, of NOAA’s National Coastal Data Development Center at the Stennis Space Center, and his team, C-Side fills the need to provide potentially life-saving information in hazardous circumstances, especially when coastal demographics have changed a great deal over the past 25 years, and there has been an influx of people unfamiliar with the threat of tropical events. C-Side is linked from the front page of “Regional Ecosystems,” a focal point for activities and information related to ecosystem management approaches for the Gulf of Mexico. Plans to expand C-Side include links to Florida’s Beach Monitoring Network and the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing Systems.

<http://ecowatch.ncddc.noaa.gov/c-side>

<http://ecowatch.ncddc.noaa.gov/>

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Workshop

Since June 2005, the NOS Special Projects Office, NOAA's Coastal Services Center, and NOS Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management have supported the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, a new regional collaboration effort among the five U.S. Gulf States (www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org), in drafting a Governors’ Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts. The plan, released on March 28, 2006, includes 11 actions within five priority issues: water quality; environmental education; nutrients; coastal and wetlands restoration; and habitat identification. Last week, NOAA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency helped the Gulf of Mexico Alliance hold an Action Plan Implementation and Integration Workshop in New Orleans, LA. In addition, representatives from across NOAA participated in the priority issue breakout sessions. The meeting focused on implementation strategies and broadening participation to non-governmental organizations and state and federal agencies to ensure "on the ground" successes by March 2009. For more information contact Brent.Ache@noaa.gov.

Grass Shrimp May Become a Leading Coastal Ecological Indicator

National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) scientists recently published a review in *Environmental Bioindicators* on the importance of grass shrimp (*Palaemonetes* species) as an indicator species of anthropogenic impacts on the coastal environment. The study concluded that correlating traditional grass shrimp assays with ecological monitoring and biomarkers of exposure will determine if coastal managers can make informed environmental decisions using this crustacean as a model indicator

species. Ecologically based studies, toxicity testing, and sublethal assessments in grass shrimp have laid the groundwork for this genus to be used as an indicator species. These findings were a result of the NCCOS-sponsored 2003 workshop, “The Use of Grass Shrimp as an Indicator of Injury to Estuarine Ecosystems.” For more information, contact Pete.Key@noaa.gov.

New NOAA Mission-Aransas Reserve Brings Excitement to Texas, Diversity to National Estuarine Research Reserve System

July 30, 2006 — It’s official! [NOAA](#) designated its 27th reserve — the [Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) — in Texas on May 3, 2006. The designation ceremony was held in Port Aransas at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute on Saturday, May 6. Vice Admiral [Conrad C. Lautenbacher](#), undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator, and [John H. Dunnigan](#), assistant administrator for the NOAA Ocean Service, headed a team of NOAA officials on hand for the celebration. Others attending the ceremony included Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (who also gave the keynote address), Congressman Solomon Ortiz, Univ. of Texas President Bill Powers, two mayors, and several state legislators.

The Mission-Aransas NERR is the newest and third largest of the NOAA NERR program, which aims to promote the sustainable use of the nation’s coasts and oceans through scientific research, education and coastal stewardship. The reserve is also unique in that it is the first in Texas — and the Western Gulf of Mexico for that matter.

“As the first reserve in the western Gulf of Mexico, Mission-Aransas adds significant value to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and broadens the opportunities to study, understand and manage America’s coastal ecosystems,” said Lautenbacher. “The reserve will attract scientists and students from across the nation to study at the site, including up to two national graduate research fellows funded annually by NOAA. NERR designation provides access to federal funding for research and education programs, environmental monitoring and science-based training programs for coastal managers and decision-makers.”

The Mission-Aransas NERR is a state-federal partnership that will receive federal funding through NOAA and be managed by the University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute. Other partners include the Texas General Land Office, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the private Fennessy Ranch (a working cattle ranch), and the Coastal Bend Land Trust — all of which own lands and submerged lands in the reserve. Aransas National Wildlife Refuge occupies the northern portion of the reserve. Read the [full story](#).

In the Gulf States

New Gulf of Mexico Alliance Education Coordinator will be Hosted by The Dauphin Island Sea Lab

Media Contact: Lisa Young 251/861-7509

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab is pleased to announce that Lee Yokel has been selected as the Environmental Education Network Coordinator for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Ms. Yokel will serve as staff to the developing Gulf-wide network, facilitate Alliance communications, and coordinate regional education and outreach activities. The position is funded by NOAA's Office of Education, structured through the Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and hosted by the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Initiated in 2004, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a partnership of the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, intent on significantly increasing regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Bush Administration's U.S. Ocean Action Plan (USOAP) recognizes the leadership that the five Gulf States have demonstrated in forming the Alliance and calls for the increased integration of resources, knowledge and expertise to address regional priorities. The Alliance has identified five issues that are regionally significant which include: Water quality for healthy beaches and shellfish beds; wetland and coastal conservation and restoration; environmental education; identification and characterization of Gulf habitats; and reductions in nutrient inputs to coastal ecosystems.

In addition, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance can potentially serve as a forum for effective bi-national regional collaboration with the six Mexican Gulf States. To read the *Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts* and learn more about the Alliance, log on to <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gulf/default.htm>.

State of Florida Seals Historic Purchase of Babcock Ranch

--Landmark acquisition preserves almost 74,000 acres of environmentally-sensitive habitat

TALLAHASSEE – Completing the largest and most unique conservation purchase in Florida's history, the State of Florida today officially took ownership of 74,000 acres of Babcock Ranch. Syd Kitson, Chairman and CEO of Kitson & Partners, today joined the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, representatives from Lee and Charlotte Counties and a host of conservation supporters to hand over the deed to the massive expanse of environmentally-sensitive land, which spans both Lee and Charlotte counties in Southwest Florida.

"Thanks to partnerships with local governments, private industry and the community, we have today completed a truly historic purchase for Florida," said Governor Jeb Bush. "By placing Babcock Ranch in public ownership, we are preserving a piece of our heritage for future generations, protecting in perpetuity a large expanse of environmentally-sensitive land and increasing access to untouched Florida in a growing part of the state."

The landmark acquisition brings to near completion a natural land corridor stretching from Lake Okeechobee to the Gulf of Mexico. In partnership with Kitson and Partners, the historic purchase preserves the single largest tract of contiguous conservation lands in the state's history while at the same

time protecting a vitally needed water-recharge area. Home to the Florida panther, Florida black bear and the crested caracara, Babcock Ranch has large tracts of pine and scrubby flatwoods and a highly functional freshwater swamp system, Telegraph Swamp.

“I am grateful to Governor Bush, the Florida Legislature and the host of supporters whose leadership and continued commitment made this monumental purchase a reality,” said DEP Secretary Colleen M. Castille. “Acquiring tens of thousand of acres of Babcock Ranch preserves the habitat for endangered wildlife, protects a valuable water-recharge area for Southwest Florida and forever preserves a piece of Florida’s ranching history. This is a remarkable achievement.”

Nearly a year ago, Kitson and Partners, reached an agreement to purchase the 91,000-acre ranch from the Babcock family and worked diligently with the State to preserve more than 80 percent of the most environmentally-sensitive lands. At a total cost of \$350 million, the State committed nearly \$310 million to purchase nearly 74,000 acres of the historic ranch for preservation, with Lee County contributing more than \$40 million to the acquisition.

“Today we have arrived at a goal that many thought was impossible just a year ago. Our goal of preserving over 80 percent of Babcock Ranch would not have been possible without the unwavering support of a group of extraordinarily committed individuals and organizations,” Kitson said. “Just as I was committed to preserving over 80 percent of the ranch, I am equally committed to making the new Babcock Ranch Community a model for environmental planning and stewardship.”

Kitson and Partners, and its new management company, Babcock Ranch Management, will initially manage the ranch to meet its commitment to the Babcock Family to maintain operations of the ranch for ten years. During that time, the State of Florida will establish a not-for-profit agency to manage the land and working ranch after Kitson and Partners management term expires. Nine board members will be appointed to the agency based on a diverse range of expertise in land management, ranch operations, wildlife management and outdoor recreation to develop a management plan that preserves and protects the property while allowing increased public access.

The 10-year, \$3 billion *Florida Forever* program established by Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature is the largest land buying initiative in the nation, conserving environmentally sensitive land, restoring water resources and preserving important cultural and historical places. Under the Governor’s leadership, more than 1.2 million acres have been placed in public ownership throughout the state. In support of Florida’s preservation initiatives, Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature this year set aside an unprecedented \$745 million to conserve environmentally-sensitive land, including \$135 million for Everglades restoration, \$310 million for Babcock Ranch and another \$300 million for additional *Florida Forever* land purchases. For more information on Florida Forever, visit www.FloridaForever.org.

Project Seeks to Restore Lost Sandbars in the Bay

A \$560,000 research project coordinated by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program seeks to restore natural sandbars to areas of the bay where they once existed.

Scientists hope that re-creating the sandbars will facilitate the recovery of underwater seagrasses vital to the bay’s health by buffering wave action that may be preventing seagrasses from growing.

The project plans to install four longshore bars in various areas of the bay, testing different construction techniques – such a riprap, dredged material and geo-tubes. Funding has been secured for one bar

installation, and grants are being sought for the three other experimental sandbars. Seagrass will be transplanted once the bars are in place, and survival and growth rates monitored.

Seagrass already has been transplanted at one site adjacent to MacDill Air Force that historically contained a sandbar. Scientists are monitoring that area to see if the presence of the seagrass might actually promote the natural creation of a sandbar, since seagrasses help to trap and stabilize bottom sediments.

Historical photos of the bay indicate sandbars once were prevalent along the shoreline in many areas, but have since disappeared. Scientists speculate that these sandbars helped soften the impacts of waves, allowing seagrasses to flourish in the quiet, protected waters behind the sandbars.

Restoring sandbars in areas vulnerable to erosion from ship wakes may allow seagrasses to once again colonize these areas, they hope.

A variety of partners are participating in this innovative project, including the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough; Lewis Environmental Services; the city of Tampa's Bay Study Group; the Tampa Port Authority; and Tampa BayWatch.

TBEP Assisting with Basin Management Plans in Hillsborough

The Tampa Bay Estuary Program is facilitating the development of comprehensive Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) to identify and address the causes of water quality impairments in three major drainage basins in Hillsborough County. TBEP is providing the facilitation and support services at the request of Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa. Development of the BMAPs is expected to take about 18 months. The project will culminate with the proposed adoption of BMAPs for the targeted areas in July 2007.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is requiring that all local governments with waterways that have been designated as "impaired" develop BMAPs to reduce loadings of key pollutants such as nutrients, bacteria, and mercury. The BMAPs will spell out specific strategies to ensure that levels of these pollutants do not exceed the Total Maximum Daily Loads established by the state for the waterways.

Waterways may be designated impaired for one pollutant, or multiple pollutants. The BMAPs will provide a watershed-based approach to restoring these waterways to health. Hillsborough County contains 77 water bodies that are considered impaired because of excess nutrients, low oxygen, heavy metal contamination or other problems. The BMAP process TBEP is facilitating will address waterways in Northwest Hillsborough County draining to Old Tampa Bay; the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bypass Canal; and the Alafia and Little Manatee River watersheds.

The BMAP process in Hillsborough will involve reviews of existing water quality information; an inventory of existing or planned pollution reduction projects; identification of new issues and information gaps; and development and implementation of comprehensive plans to address source of pollution. Major stakeholders involved in this lengthy process include the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough; city and county public works, planning and water departments; health departments; the Southwest Florida Water Management District; private industries; and scientists and citizens. TBEP has contracted with HSW Engineering, Inc. to conduct several stakeholder meetings in 2006 to obtain input on development of the BMAPs. The effort is being financed with a \$94,500 grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Jefferson Parish Adopts Flood Elevation Guidelines; Approval Clears Way for Hazard Mitigation Money

BATON ROUGE, La. (July 26, 2006) - The Jefferson Parish Council recently agreed to adopt the Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFE) as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and required by the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), clearing the way for \$6.8 million to help raise area homes to a safer elevation. Now that the parish has adopted the new guidelines, it is also eligible to receive a ten percent cost share match from the State to repair critical pieces of local infrastructure including roads, bridges and public buildings. "The Jefferson Parish Council has done a very smart thing for their citizens," said Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. "This sends a clear signal to the rest of Louisiana that Jefferson Parish is committed to rebuilding safer, stronger and smarter than before."

The parish's recent adoption also makes funding available for various hazard mitigation grant programs aimed at reducing losses in future disasters. This is only the first of several hazard mitigation projects in Jefferson Parish to be recommended to FEMA for funding. Additional recommendations are forthcoming now that the parish has adopted the ABFE.

"This signifies an important success for the people of Jefferson Parish," said Tim Coulon, LRA Board Member. "I also want to thank the Jefferson Parish Council and Parish President Aaron Broussard and his staff for their vision and support for these new standards."

Parishes that fail to adopt the ABFE as recommended by FEMA will not be eligible for the cost sharing program or additional funds for hazard mitigation. "We applaud the Jefferson Parish Council for its foresightedness and commitment to rebuilding safely," said Shane Rauh, State Hazard Mitigation Officer for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP). "In return, Jefferson is now eligible to receive significant funds and resources that would not have been available otherwise."

ALL ABOARD: Louisiana Planners Back Commuter Rail Service

Friday, July 21, 2006 By Coleman Warner, Staff writer

A marked-up map of south Louisiana bearing the tag "Bayoutopia" was spread across a convention center table Thursday, reflecting the thoughts of several people about what the region's best course will be for residential and transportation development in the Hurricane Katrina recovery era.

One remark scribbled across New Orleans pointed to a bit of planning angst: "The group disagrees about whether to rebuild low parts of N.O. east and St. Bernard." But a thick mark tracing railway lines connecting New Orleans to Houma, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Opelousas, Covington and Slidell signaled consensus: Louisianians are more ready than ever to use a commuter rail service that can move them between far-flung jobs and homes, as well as serve as a means of evacuation when storms threaten. "Where I would have a (rail) stop, I would try to concentrate development there," said Ralph Thayer, a New Orleans planner seated at the table. Thayer and Scott Darrah, president of the Gentilly Improvement Association, said high gas prices, increasing traffic congestion and the dispersal of families since Katrina have sharply improved chances that commuting by rail will gain broad support.

A new embrace of rail transit and interest in developing pedestrian-friendly enclaves that are less dependent on cars were among ideas touted during a gathering of about 300 people at the Ernest N.

Morial Convention Center, part of a post-hurricane planning exercise directed by the Louisiana Recovery Authority. Clusters of activists invited to the workshop from across the New Orleans area broke into small groups to debate transportation, land use, storm protection, economic development and wetland restoration, then used markers and stickers on maps to convey their preferences. It mirrored an exercise earlier in the week in Lake Charles, Lafayette and Baton Rouge, part of a Louisiana Speaks program that will craft a vision for change by 2050. Similar meetings are expected to be called soon in the Houma-Thibodaux area and on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, also using an invitation-only format.

Some of those at the New Orleans workshop were unsure of what effect the brainstorming will have on the region. But LRA planning consultants said it's critical to look beyond immediate recovery issues and test ideas for how major public investments and new policies can be used to make south Louisiana safer and more vibrant. Findings from the workshops will identify popular ideas that ultimately will be tested through some means of polling, they said. A regional planning document is expected to be developed by the spring. "Congress is going to listen to that; the (Army) Corps of Engineers is going to listen," consultant John Fregonese said. "We're not going to put together scenarios that cannot be done."

People at the workshops have expressed a strong view that education is the key to the region's economic recovery, and they have been sophisticated in evaluating different scenarios for improving levees and restoring wetlands as part of a broad strategy for upgrading storm protection, consultants said. Detailed maps distributed at the meeting allowed participants to choose between a future levee system that provides "high-protection" levees across much of the coast and a mixed system that promises high levees around much of the New Orleans area and Lake Charles, but lesser levee structures across most of the coast-marsh territory.

The more elaborate and far more costly option came in for sharp criticism. In one small group, Jefferson Parish planner Terri Wilkinson called it "ridiculous, this high level of protection across south Louisiana. It would be cost-prohibitive. . . . It's a level of protection we don't need for relatively unpopulated areas." Wilkinson's small group endorsed the mixed system of levee improvements. It also backed a strategy for restoring wetlands that combines the delivery of soil sediment to marsh areas through pipelines and through large-scale diversions of rivers. Another group member, Plaquemines Parish coastal zone administrator Andrew MacInnes, said Louisiana often fails to make aggressive use of diversion structures, such as the White's Ditch siphon on the Mississippi River's east bank, that are already available. "Would you write to say, 'Utilize existing structures,' " he said as marks were being applied to the map. "White's Ditch has not run in 16, 17 years. It's a landowner issue."

At the start of the workshop, Robert Twilley, director of LSU's new Gulf restoration initiative, said planners need to bring a "bolder, broader, more comprehensive perspective" to what is an urgent land-loss issue. "This is not a situation where people have moved to the coast. This is where the coast has moved to the people."

Louisiana Locals List Priorities for State's Long-term Recovery

Emilie Bahr Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS - Representatives from the Lafourche/Terrebonne area gathered with scientists, engineers, elected officials and other participants from across South Louisiana Thursday for the final of four Louisiana Recovery Authority-sponsored sessions held across the region this week. Organized by Calthorpe Associates, an urban planning and architectural firm based on the West Coast, the series of stakeholder meetings known as Louisiana Speaks were designed to bring together regional leaders for long-term planning for flood-risk reduction, coastal restoration and economic development for all of

South Louisiana. The New Orleans session focused specifically on the region from the Atchafalaya River east.

Participants divided into groups and were presented with several scenarios from which to choose varying degrees of flood-risk reduction and wetlands-restoration. The proposals ranged from those that called for virtually no action to those that called for very dramatic - and costly - intervention measures. These scenarios were developed in advance of the session, said Robert Twilley, a coastal scientist at Louisiana State University.

WETLAND RESTORATION

The least expensive among the wetlands-restoration proposals presented relied on river diversion exclusively - a process that would require significant time to appreciate results. The most expensive relied on funneling dredged sediment through pipelines. An intermediate scenario, seemingly favored by most, relied on a hybrid model - one that proposed building land immediately by pumping sediment to rebuild barrier islands, marshes and coastal forests while river diversion projects were being constructed.

As expected, differing opinions arose over what shape coastal-protection systems should take. For example, some called for armoring shorelines with concrete or rock barricades. Some technical authorities, meanwhile, argued for abandoning the bird's foot delta of the Mississippi River, which they said would allow for the retention of the estimated 150 million tons of sediment now being lost off the continental shelf each year, to nourish the barrier islands. They called the idea of armoring shorelines an ill-informed one that won't work for the long-term in South Louisiana, where land was built for thousands of years with river-deposited sediment.

INFRASTRUCTURE, OUTCOME

Many groups also favored high-density development over urban sprawl, pointing to a desire for more walkable communities connected by a system of rapid transit throughout South Louisiana. A group that included Jane Arnett, executive director of the South Central Industrial Association, and Shannon Chiasson, finance director of Lafourche Parish government, for example, proposed connecting Houma and New Orleans by rail. "Why not?" Arnett said. At the meeting's close, groups divided into larger contingents to exchange their proposals, which were subsequently collected by meeting facilitators.

The yields of this week's planning sessions will be used to form several possible strategies that will be analyzed to determine likely costs, benefits and implications and ultimately formed into a package to be presented to the public sometime around January, said Peter Calthorpe, principal at the urban planning company behind the day's events.

Local representatives, who had gathered in advance of Thursday's session to formulate a list of priorities, including coastal restoration projects such as the reconnecting of Bayou Lafourche to the Mississippi River and flood-risk mediation measures such as the Morganza to the Gulf hurricane protection system, said their ideas were for the most part well-received.

Kevin Belanger, CEO of the South Central Planning and Development Commission, said the meeting was representative of a new approach to planning in a post-Katrina landscape - one that integrates coastal restoration, flood protection and economic development considerations.

"I think it's a great start," he said of the session, adding that it was important for local officials to be in attendance. "We just can't take it for granted that someone else is going to (advocate) for us. We need to be here saying what we need." Vic Lafont, director of the South Louisiana Economic Council, agreed. "It's sobering," he said of the material considered. "We think in terms of today. All this is based on 50 years. We all have this vague guess about how things are going to be and this brings it home."

A similar process to that begun this week was used in rethinking Salt Lake City, said Calthorpe, whose firm was behind the project it considers one of its most well-known. “To really do something profound,” he said, “you’ve got to have a real groundswell. I think it can happen here.”

Study: Katrina, Rita May Have KO’d Islands: Scientists Fail to find Chandeleur’s Sandy Start to Rebuilding

Jul 31, 2006 By [MIKE DUNNE](#), Advocate staff writer

Researchers mapping the Louisiana coast say they can’t find the sand and sediment that normally rebuilt the Chandeleur Islands east of New Orleans after past big storms. Hurricanes like Camille in 1969 and Ivan in 2004 pushed sand to the rear of the islands in what is known as “overwash fans,” or splays of sand usually in the shape of an open folding fan. After each monster storm, the island chain slowly rebuilt itself on those fans, always a little smaller than before the storms.

Underwater mapping around the islands and in the Gulf of Mexico shows no such fans or any other sands and sediments that might help rebuild the islands, according to University of New Orleans geology professors Shea Penland and Mark Kulp. The mapping also shows evidence of landslides on the seafloor slopes on the Gulf side, which they say has not been seen before. The now-deeper water might increase the size of some of the waves hitting — and eroding — the remnants, they said. Another research vessel mapping another part of the chain apparently found the same landslide scars, Kulp said.

Dawn Lavoie of the U.S. Geological Survey, working with Penland and Kulp, even wonders if Katrina so severely damaged the islands one has to ask: “Is there a threshold (that has been reached) where the island won’t rebuild itself?” Penland said the islands act as a “speed bump,” or barrier for storms approaching southeastern Louisiana and coastal Mississippi. Computer models designed to predict hurricane flooding show the islands help reduce the storm surge in the marshes protecting the New Orleans area, he said.

Penland is leading the Barrier Island Comprehensive Monitoring effort to map the Louisiana coast, barrier islands and offshore zones. It is being funded by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and UNO. “This is the biggest assessment of the coastline” in more than 20 years, said Penland, who is also director of the geology department at UNO. “We are looking at every map that has ever been made since 1850” in trying to decide how Louisiana’s coastline and offshore waters and barrier islands have changed.

Kulp is overseeing the underwater mapping, which will provide new data to complete a 100-year history of seafloor change along the coast. All of the data will eventually be available for the state, Corps of Engineers and other agencies that will be designing future coastal restoration projects.

Kulp’s underwater surveys found what appear to be seafloor landslides on the Gulf of Mexico side of the northern tip of the island chain. Another ship doing similar work along the central Chandeleurs found similar seafloor collapses, Kulp said. The two groups have not had a chance yet to share data, Kulp said. The wind, waves and tides have always moved sand around the islands but they always found an equilibrium, Kulp said. But Katrina was “a major event that moved volumes of sediment” that “tampered with the equilibrium.”

Penland said a 1980s survey found the islands pretty stable “and we thought they would still be around in 300 years. Now, we are saying, maybe a decade.” Historically, the fronts of the islands lost 20-30 feet of land each year, usually being rolled to the back of the island in those “overwash fans.” Between 1996-

2004, that loss grew to 300 feet per year following hurricanes like Georges, Lili and Ivan and Tropical Storm Isidore. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita practically blew the islands away, leaving only remnants.

“Katrina events tell us a lot,” Penland said. With forecasts for more powerful storms in the future, lessons from Katrina may become very valuable for decision-makers of the future, Penland said. Story originally published in The Advocate <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/3455671.html>

Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Launches New Web Site

BILOXI, Miss. –The Department of Marine Resource’s Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) has just launched its new Web site: www.grandbaynerr.org. The new Web site is designed to provide its visitors with general information about estuaries, specific information about Mississippi’s estuaries and coastal habitats, as well as detailed information about the education, research and stewardship activities that take place at the reserve. Current weather and water quality data gathered in the reserve are also available.

“When we designed this Web site, we really tried to keep in mind the needs of our community,” said Jennifer Buchanan, Education Coordinator for the Reserve. “We have included sections that are of interest to all audiences including students, teachers, coastal decision-makers, researchers and recreational users.” Buchanan encourages the community to provide feedback to the reserve regarding the Web site.

“We are especially looking for items of historical information and pictures regarding the lands of the reserve, so that we can add them to the Web site to make it more historically relevant,” said Buchanan. If you have ideas for enhancing the Web site, please provide your input through the feedback section of the Web site. For more information, contact Jennifer Buchanan at jen.buchanan@dmr.state.ms.us or (228) 475-7047.

The Grand Bay Reserve is located near the community of Pecan in southeast Jackson County and includes wild lands and waterways from Bangs Lake to the Alabama state line. A major goal of the Reserve is to provide for research coordination and dissemination of scientific data to the community and local decision-makers to provide sound information on which to base management decisions. The 18,000+-acre reserve is home to several rare plant and animal species and serves as an essential nursery habitat for numerous important commercial and recreational fish species. The Reserve is managed through state-federal partnership between the Department of Marine Resources and its partners—Mississippi Secretary of State’s Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi State University, The University of Southern Mississippi, The Nature Conservancy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the State by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.state.ms.us.

MS DMR Wins National Award

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received an Award of Excellence for the “Preserving and Enjoying Mississippi’s Coastal Resources” 2005 Marine Information Calendar at the annual National Association of Government Communicators Communications School held recently in Baltimore, Maryland.

The DMR is one of about 80 government agencies in the United States to earn the prestigious Blue Pencil Award at this year’s annual NAGC Blue Pencil/Gold Screen Awards banquet, which recognizes excellence in written, filmed, audio/videotaped, published and photographed government information products.

More than 500 entries were submitted in the annual competition. Judging was done across the nation by both governmental and nongovernmental information professionals who volunteer their time to judge and give peer feedback on entries. Entries were judged on production, writing, editorial content, layout and design, and quality and creativity. Entries were also reviewed to determine that they achieved the purpose for which they were produced, that they served the needs of their target audiences and that they represented a cost-effective use of financial and other resources.

“It is an honor to be recognized by the National Association of Government Communicators,” said DMR Public Relations Director Lauren Thompson. “We gratefully acknowledge our partnership with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium who provided the tide data for the calendar. The Marine Information Calendar was developed to serve as both an educational outreach to the schools—through the calendar art contest—to encourage environmental stewardship and as a useful tool for fishermen, providing practical information that they can use, such as tide data, sunrise/sunset times, moon phases, and saltwater fish size and possession limits. The DMR looks forward to continuing to provide educational products like this to the community.”

The National Association of Government Communicators is a national, nonprofit professional network of federal, state, and local government employees who disseminate information within and outside government. Its members are guided by a professional code of ethics, which demands complete and timely communication between government and the people it serves.

Mississippi Governor to Host Recovery Expo

In order to advance the rebuilding effort in a way that makes coastal Mississippi a better place to live, work and play than it was before Hurricane Katrina, Governor Haley Barbour is hosting the Governor's Recovery Expo to be held August 11-13. It will serve as an important event for families, businesses, builders, nonprofits and government officials to come together and learn about the tools for rebuilding our future.

The Expo will be a comprehensive, convention-style event for the public, encompassing all aspects of recovery and renewal for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The public will be able to visit booths, view displays and observe demonstrations in the Mississippi Coast Coliseum.

Presentations will be given covering recovery-related topics, including rebuilding safer and stronger, building codes, financial assistance for housing and business recovery, health care, historical building recovery, and identifying parcel floodplain elevations. Outside, model houses will be on display for expo

attendees to tour. Exhibits will be set up by public and private organizations involved in rebuilding coastal Mississippi.

Governor Barbour urges all Gulf Coast residents to attend this historic three-day event, which will present South Mississippians with the information and resources they need in order to recover from the worst natural disaster in our nation's history. For updates on the Governor's Recovery Expo, visit www.governorbarbour.com/recovery/expo.

Other News

Stakeholders Discuss Closure of Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet

Congress directs Corps to begin MR-GO de-authorization study

NEW ORLEANS – The New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted a stakeholder meeting today to receive input on a comprehensive plan to de-authorize deep draft navigation on the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet. Stakeholders were introduced to the plan and provided an opportunity for interactive planning. The goal of the meeting was to establish a common understanding of the study authority and provide an avenue for stakeholders to express their opinions and expectations.

Corps representatives also announced that the Galveston District of the Corps' Southwestern Division has been asked to provide technical assistance and independent oversight on the MR-GO Deep Draft De-Authorization Plan due to the New Orleans District's Katrina recovery workload. This is the first stakeholder meeting on the MR-GO that the Corps has held since hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The meeting provided stakeholders from the environmental, business, academic, and shipping arenas, as well as state and local governments, a forum to begin discussions on the many issues surrounding the waterway and its future based on the Congressional directive to de-authorize the channel.

An initiative from the meeting resulted in several stakeholders groups agreeing to meet independently to review previous documents, plans and proposals related to the MR-GO with the intention of finding areas of agreement within their own plans. Stakeholder meetings will occur frequently during plan preparation to continue public involvement. A second stakeholder meeting will be held in mid-August. By that time, a web site will be developed containing historical and current information on the MR-GO De-Authorization Plan.

Comments. The public is invited to mail comments, plans or proposals throughout the planning effort to the MR-GO project manager at USACE, Gregory Miller, CEMVN-PM-C, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans 70160-0267.

2006 Gulf Guardian Awards

Application deadline extended to Sept 15, 2006

STENNIS SPACE CENTER, MS, July 27, 2006 - The [Gulf of Mexico Program](#), an office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has extended the submission deadline for 2006 Gulf Guardian Award applications to Sept 15, 2006. Informational flyers are available below:

[2006 Gulf Guardian Flyer - English](#)

[2006 Gulf Guardian Flyer - Spanish](#)

This will mark the seventh year for the awards program which was started to honor the businesses, industries, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who are striving to make an environmental difference in the Gulf of Mexico.

Projects and efforts within Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas are considered each year for the award which includes the following categories:

- Business
- Youth/Education
- Partnerships
- Government
- Individual
- Civic/Non-Profit Organizations

First, second, and third place winners in all six categories will receive a memento, press coverage on their project, and recognition by their peers. First-place winners also receive a video about their project or efforts. For more information, call Terry Teague (228) 688-1172. In the 2004 Gulf Guardian Awards, the **Gulf of Mexico Foundation** received a first place in the Civic/Nonprofit Organization category. Past winners are online at: <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/gulfguard.html>.

Applications are available for download on the Gulf of Mexico Program's website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/gulfguard/about-ggawards.html>

Wild Celery Beds Extend Nursery Habitat for Fishery Species

River diversions planned to combat coastal land loss on the Gulf Coast may freshen coastal waters significantly, thereby increasing the area of wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*) beds, a common low-salinity submerged plant. What impact on estuarine habitat will this change have? According to one study comparing use of *Vallisneria* beds to marsh and unvegetated bottom habitats by fishery species in Barataria Bay, LA, more *Vallisneria* might benefit some key species. Blue crabs were found to be 8-10 times more abundant in *Vallisneria* beds than in non-vegetated habitat (depending on the season), and white shrimp were 30 times more abundant in *Vallisneria* in the fall. The few brown shrimp and spotted sea trout captured in the study were found exclusively in *Vallisneria* beds. The abundance and species richness of other organisms were greater in *Vallisneria* than at unvegetated sites, and similar to measurements observed in marsh sites, which are well-known to provide nursery habitat to many of these species. Location and spatial extent of the SAV beds proved important, as beds nearer to marsh sites harbored more species in greater abundance than beds further from marshes. Because *Vallisneria* grows subtidally and does not die back in winter, it may extend the spatial and temporal availability of structured habitats such as marshes. This alternative structural habitat may be especially important during times of low water for blue crab and white shrimp, as other data collected as part of this study suggest that these species use *Vallisneria* beds as nursery habitat.

Source: Rozas, L. P. and T. J. Minello. 2006. Nekton use of *Vallisneria americana* Michx. (wild celery) beds and adjacent habitats in coastal Louisiana. *Estuaries and Coasts* 29(2): 297-310. ([View Abstract](#))

World Water Monitoring Day: October 18, 2006

Description:

On October 18, citizens of the global community will join in World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD), a worldwide opportunity to positively impact the health of rivers, lakes, estuaries and other waterbodies. Volunteer monitoring groups, water quality agencies, students, and the general public are invited to test four key indicators of water quality: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity.

Register your site. Choose any lake, stream, bay, or other waterbody where you can safely monitor. Register your site beginning July 18 each year by clicking on Register & Report to enter the World Water Monitoring Day registration database.

Prepare your monitoring equipment. Use your own equipment or purchase an easy-to-use test kit by clicking on Order Kits. Each kit contains an informative instruction book and enough reagents to repeat up to 50 tests.

Monitor your site. Invite others to help you monitor or do it yourself. Visit your site anytime from September 18 through October 18 to test the water. Remember, safety first!

Report your data. You did the work, so let us know about your water. You can submit your results by returning back to where you registered your site in the first place. Results may be entered anytime from September 18 through December 18 for inclusion in the annual World Water Monitoring Day summary reports.

America's Clean Water Foundation (ACWF) is a not-for-profit organization based in Washington, DC, that promotes youth education, public involvement, and technical program exchange for clean water. Created in 1989, ACWF has organized numerous national and international events and programs for the improvement of water quality.

Website: <http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/>

Contact: Ed Moyer, World Water Monitoring Day Coordinator

Organization: America's Clean Water Foundation

Phone: 202-746-8493

Email: e.moyer@acwf.org

Energy

Senate Approves More Offshore Drilling in Gulf, Sets up Confrontation with House

August 02, 2006 — By H. Josef Hebert, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted Tuesday to open 8.3 million acres of federal waters in the central Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas drilling, setting up a confrontation with the House which wants even more drilling in waters now off-limits. Supporters said the measure would be a major step toward producing more domestic energy and forcing down natural gas prices that have soared in recent years.

The Senate approved the measure by a vote of 71-25. It now must be reconciled with much broader drilling legislation passed by the House in June. Those negotiations are likely to begin in September. "This bill will substantially reduce our reliance on foreign oil and gas. ... It brings more American energy to American consumers," declared Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn. Likewise, Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., called the legislation "welcome news for the people of the United States" -- for homeowners facing high heating bills as well as for manufacturers and chemical companies that have seen natural gas costs soar.

Some critics of the legislation noted that it will be years before any oil or gas will be taken from the 8.3 million acres and that the legislation falls short of addressing many of the country's energy problems. At best "this will supply a small amount of gas years from now," said Sen. Mark Dayton, D-Minn., who decried the inability to broaden the legislation beyond drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Still, the bill attracted wide, bipartisan support as lawmakers sought to show the flag on energy as they prepared to leave for the monthlong summer recess. The House is already gone.

Some senators noted that natural gas prices jumped by 11 percent this week amid concern about supplies because of the intense summer heat. The price was at more than \$8 per thousand cubic feet on the spot market, compared to under \$6 a few weeks ago. Despite the solid Senate vote, the bill's prospect of clearing Congress remains uncertain.

The House-passed bill would allow energy companies access to waters far beyond the central Gulf and lift the quarter-century-old drilling moratorium on Outer Continental Shelf waters on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, while allowing states to decide whether to continue the drilling bans. House leaders are eager to negotiate a compromise, once the Senate acts.

Senate Democrats and GOP moderates say such a broad bill would threaten areas that have long opposed energy development, from New England to California and the Pacific Northwest. Senate leaders say it would spark a filibuster and probably kill any offshore drilling legislation this year.

The 8.3 million acres affected by the Senate measure is believed to contain 1.2 billion barrels of oil and nearly 6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, enough to heat 6 million homes for 15 years. The bill would create a "zone of protection" for Florida that would stretch 125 to 300 miles from the state's beaches at various points. It also would funnel tens of millions of additional dollars to the four other Gulf coast states as their share of future oil and gas revenues.

One part of the area, known as Lease Area 181, had been scheduled for lease by the Interior Department in the 1990s, but was placed off-limits by the Bush administration in 2001 at the request of Florida Gov.

Jeb Bush. The remaining 6.3 million acres south of Lease Area 181 has been under a congressional drilling moratorium for years. Another Republican governor, California's Arnold Schwarzenegger said, "We must keep today's Senate action from opening the door to ... more oil drilling and exploration off our beautiful coast. I have repeatedly expressed my opposition to this and any other measure that would weaken the national oil and gas leasing moratorium that has been protecting the California coast for the last 25 years." Broad opposition to the Senate bill began to melt last week when Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., who had threatened to filibuster any offshore drilling legislation, said he would go along if the Senate promised not to accept the House measure.

The issue has attracted intense lobbying from environmentalists arguing that drilling in areas now off-limits would threaten coastal beaches and marine life if a spill should occur. Businesses -- from chemical companies and manufacturers to utilities and farmers -- have pushed lawmakers hard to open more waters to drilling as a way to expand natural gas supplies and perhaps lower prices.

The bill calls for the Department of the Interior to open bids for developing Lease Area 181 within a year and follow with lease sales in the rest of the area -- which is farther off shore in waters more than 10,000 feet deep -- as soon as practical. Energy companies for years have coveted Lease Area 181 because the gas and oil it holds is close to existing pipelines and other infrastructure. It lies about 100 miles off the Louisiana coast.

Under the bill, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama and Mississippi would get 37.5 percent of the royalty revenue the federal government collects from the oil and gas that is pumped off their shores. They now get less than 2 percent. That is expected to be as much as \$1.2 billion a year within 10 years with Louisiana likely to get about half of that. "There's no policy justification for diverting these revenues," Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., said. He said while the revenue sharing will increase gradually, between 2016 and 2055 the states could get as much as \$30 billion. After that their share could be \$12.5 billion a year.

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said these states have been shortchanged and that it's only fair that their share be increased. "We will use the money to restore a great coastline ... restore the great wetlands" off the Louisiana coast and improve storm protection, she said.

Major World Cities Team Up to Fight Global Warming

August 02, 2006 — By Reuters

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles, London, New York, Seoul and 18 other cities joined forces Tuesday in a global warming project aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Launched by former President Bill Clinton's foundation, the initiative will allow cities to pool their purchasing power and lower the price of energy-saving products and provide technical assistance to help them become more energy efficient.

Urban areas are responsible for more than 75 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, making reduced energy crucial in the effort to slow the pace of global warming. Energy-efficient traffic lights, street lighting, the use of biofuels for city transport, and traffic congestion schemes were some of the practical steps that cities are expected to take to reduce greenhouse gases.

"The world's largest cities can have a major impact on this. Already they are at the center of developing the technologies and innovative new practices that provide hope that we can radically reduce carbon emissions," said London Mayor Ken Livingstone, who launched the initiative in Los Angeles with Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The Clinton Foundation said it hoped that coordination between major cities will boost efforts now being made by some areas on an individual basis. The partnership with the foundation began with the participation of 22 cities -- Berlin, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Caracas, Chicago, Delhi, Dhaka, Istanbul, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Melbourne, Mexico City, New York, Paris, Philadelphia, Rome, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Toronto and Warsaw.

Training and Conferences

Charting the Course for Ocean Science in the United States: Research Priorities for the Next Decade

August 3, 2006

You are invited to attend a public briefing on Charting the Course for Ocean Science in the United States: Research Priorities for the Next Decade, which outlines the national ocean research priorities for the United States for the next ten years.

The briefing will be held at 2:00 PM on September 6, 2006 at:

Louisiana State University
School of the Coast and Environment
Dalton J. Woods Auditorium – Energy, Coast, and Environment Building
Nicholson Drive Extension, Baton Rouge, LA
<http://www.ence.lsu.edu>

Members from the research community, ocean educators, government representatives (federal, state, tribal, and local), industry groups, international representatives, non-governmental organizations, and any interested individuals are invited to attend. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to swalker@usgcrp.gov by September 1, 2006.

Called for in the U.S. Ocean Action Plan and developed by the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, this draft document, along with a follow-on Implementation Strategy, will describe a vision for U.S. ocean science and technology, highlight key areas of interaction of our society and the ocean, and identify critical ocean research priorities for these areas. This draft document will be available for public comment late summer 2006. Additional regional briefings and conference presentations on the national ocean research priorities will be held across the country during the next few months. A developing list of the public briefings is located at:

http://ocean.ceq.gov/about/sup_jsost_orpp_outreach.html

For more information, contact:

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2006 AWRA Wetlands Restoration Dialogue

September 18, 20006 – September 20, 2006 - Bahia Mar Resort Fort Lauderdale, FL

Convened by American Water Resources Association (AWRA) in cooperation with the South Florida Water Management District the Wetlands Restoration Dialogue will expand on the ground-breaking and successful model established at the May 2005 First Annual International Conference on Restoring the Everglades. Invited speakers with expertise in national and international efforts in wetlands restoration will provide updates and insights in their particular area of expertise on the progress of wetlands restoration in the United States, and globally.

In each of several disciplines essential to the successful implementation of any wetlands restoration efforts subject areas (engineering, ecology, agriculture, water quality, applied practice, and political, economic, and community considerations), "Thought Leaders" in each subject area will make subject-based presentations on the state-of-the-discipline as it relates to wetlands restoration. Presentations by experts engaged in wetlands restoration projects from around the country will follow. Finally, SFWMD personnel and their cooperators will present the progress of the Everglades Restoration Project. Presenters and attendees will have an opportunity to interact during the facilitated discussion periods that will follow the presentations in each session. On the final day of the conference, the Thought Leaders and experts will participate in the Closing Plenary and Open Discussion.

Objectives of the Dialogue

- Provide a forum for collaboration and high level exchange between and among invited experts and attendees in divergent fields -- within and outside the Everglades restoration project area.
- Share and discuss recent accomplishments and future plans for Everglades ...and other wetlands ... restoration projects.
- Present information and analyze feedback to meet National

Who Should Attend

This conference will be useful to anyone interested in the progress of wetlands restoration in the United States; anyone involved in wetlands restoration at the local, state, or national level; and anyone interested in participating in the dialogue that will help shape wetlands restoration efforts across the globe.

Website: <http://www.awra.org/meetings/Wetlands2006/index.html>

Contact: Terry Meyer

Organization: American Water Resources Association

Phone: 540.687.8390

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Email: info@awra.org

Did you find this edition useful? Please send suggestions, comments, and new items for publication to Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov